

# **“Discovering Delaware’s Maritime Past”–17th annual Chautauqua tent show to take place in Lewes, Del. from June 21–25, 2015**

(DOVER, Del.–April 16, 2015)–The First State’s essential relationship with the Delaware River and Bay, and the sea, will be brought to life during the 17th annual Chautauqua tent show, “Discovering Delaware’s Maritime Past,” that will take place at a variety of downtown Lewes, Del. locations from June 21 to 25, 2015. A preliminary schedule of events is attached. Admission is free and open to the public. For additional information, call 302-645-1148 or visit the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs [website](#).



Christian Johnson will  
portray Gov. William

Augustus Newell, founder of  
U.S. Life-Saving Service,  
on June 24, 2015.

A unique mixture of education and entertainment, Lewes' Chautauqua will be held under a large tent and will feature re-enactors who take on the personas of celebrated historical figures, educating and entertaining audiences as they bring the past to life. Audience members are encouraged to ask questions and interact with the featured characters who will include American-Revolutionary-War-era sea captain Gideon Olmstead; enslaved African-American poet Phillis Wheatley discussing her voyage to Britain; Gov. William Augustus Newell, founder of U.S. Life-Saving Service; and first lady Abigail Adams discussing trade and embargoes during the American Revolution.



Kim Hanley will portray  
first lady Abigail Adams on  
June 25, 2015.

Chautauqua takes its name from a series of adult education programs that were first held at a campsite on the shores of Lake Chautauqua in upstate New York during the late-19th century. Chautauquas spread throughout America in the

late-19th and early-20th centuries bringing speakers, teachers, musicians, entertainers, preachers and specialists of the day to a wide cross-section of the nation's rural and small-town population. Circuit Chautauquas (also known as Tent Chautauquas) were an itinerant manifestation of the movement. Programs would be presented in tents pitched in a field near town. After several days, the Chautauqua would fold its tents and move on to the next community. The popularity of Chautauquas peaked in the mid-1920s, after which radio, movies and automobiles brought about the gradual disappearance of the movement by the 1940s.

Reborn in the 1970s as a vehicle for humanities education, modern Chautauquas are organized around a core program in which re-enactors portray celebrated historical figures, speaking and interacting with audiences, often in the setting of a large outdoor tent. Modern Chautauquas have been presented annually in Delaware since 1999 featuring a wide variety of historical figures including Abraham Lincoln; Amelia Earhart; Dolley Madison; Eleanor Roosevelt; Edgar Allan Poe; the Lone Ranger; John Philip Sousa; and Delaware's own Pvt. James Elbert, Maj. Allen McLane, F.O.C. Darley and Clifford Brown. Delaware's 2015 Chautauqua tent show is being presented as a partnership between the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, the Lewes Historical Society and the Lewes Chamber of Commerce.

The [Zwaanendael Museum](#) was built in 1931 to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the state's first European colony, Swanendael, established by the Dutch along Hoorn Kill (present-day Lewes-Rehoboth Canal) in 1631. Designed by E. William Martin (architect of Legislative Hall and the Hall of Records in Dover), the museum is modeled after the town hall in Hoorn, the Netherlands, and features a stepped facade gable with carved stonework and decorated shutters. The museum's exhibits and presentations provide a showcase for Lewes-area maritime, military and social history. In addition to the 2015

Chautauqua tent show, the museum is currently featuring the exhibit "[Delaware and the War of 1812](#)" which examines the service and sacrifice of Delawareans of 1812 to 1815; and "[A Seaborne Citizenry: The DeBraak and Its Atlantic World](#)" which explores His Majesty's Sloop of War DeBraak, a British warship that sank off the Delaware coast on May 25, 1798.



Zwaanendael Museum

The [Lewes Historical Society](#) is committed to promoting the preservation, interpretation and cultural enrichment of Lewes, Del.—one of America's most historic towns. As part of its mission, the society maintains twelve beautifully restored historic properties dating from 1665 to 1898. Open for public visitation, these properties, in conjunction with the society's educational programs and special events, help to tell Lewes' story of maritime adventure, architectural elegance and over 375 years of colonial charm.

The Zwaanendael Museum is administered by the [Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs](#), an agency of the state of Delaware. The division enhances Delaware's quality of life by preserving the state's unique historical heritage, fostering community stability and economic vitality and providing

educational programs and assistance to the general public on Delaware history and heritage. The division's diverse array of services includes administration of the state historic preservation office, operation of museums and a conference center, conservation of the state's archaeological and historic-objects collections and management of historic properties across Delaware. Primary funding for division programs and services is provided by annual appropriations from the Delaware General Assembly and grants from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, a federal agency. However, the contents and opinions expressed in the division's programs and services do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Department of the Interior.

### **"Discovering Delaware's Maritime Past"**

**17th annual Chautauqua tent show, Lewes, Del., June 21–25, 2015**

#### **Preliminary schedule as of April 15, 2015**

Free admission for all events

#### **Sunday, June 21, 2015**

**Zwaanendael Museum, 102 Kings Highway, Lewes. 302-645-1148**

Noon                    "Captain John Smith on the Nanticoke." Lecture by archaeologist Dan Griffith explores the natural environment of the Nanticoke River watershed in the early-17th century

1:15 p.m.            "Piloting on the Delaware River and Bay." Lecture by retired river-pilot Dick Buckaloo

2:30 p.m.            "Songs and Stories of Old Sailing Days." Family-friendly performance in which [Matthew Dodd](#), dressed in period clothing, takes listeners back in time to the days of sail

3:45 p.m.            "The History of the C & D Canal: A Tale of Towns, Villages, Locks, and Bridges." Historian [Michael Dixon](#) tells the fascinating story of how the canal shaped



## Delaware's history

6 p.m. "Songs and Stories of Old Sailing Days." Family-friendly performance in which Matthew Dodd, dressed in period clothing, takes listeners back in time to the days of sail

7:15 p.m. "Adventures of a Sea Captain During the Revolutionary War." [David Scott Taylor](#) of the American Historical Theatre portrays Capt. Gideon Olmstead



Matthew Dodd will present sea shanties and stories on June 21, 2015.

### **Monday, June 22, 2015**

**Zwaanendael Museum, 102 Kings Highway, Lewes. 302-645-1148**

Noon "Delaware Built: The American Line." Lecture by [Dr. William Flayhart](#) on the first successful American-flag steamship line, started in 1873

1:15 p.m. Scott Bossert, marine supervisor for the [Delaware Bay and River Cooperative](#), discusses the organization's oil-spill-recovery vessel

2:30 p.m. "Re-Creation of the 1950 Study of Zooplankton in the Delaware Bay." [Chris Petrone](#), marine education specialist for the University of Delaware's Sea Grant College Program, discusses the re-created study being conducted aboard the Joanne Daiber, the program's new boat which is named for the researcher who led the original study and who was the first female scientist at the university

3:45 p.m. "Menhaden Industry in Lewes." Lecture by Tom Brown, Lewes Historical Society volunteer and former chief of staff of the National Archives and Records Administration

6 p.m. The [Bowman-Braddock Duo](#). Flute and guitar performance with readings from Howard Pyle's pirate story "Tom Chist and the Treasure Box" which was set at Cape Henlopen

7:15 p.m. "An Enslaved Poet's Voyage to Britain and Back." [Dr. Daisy Century](#) of the American Historical Theatre portrays Phillis Wheatley, the first published African-American poet, recounting her Atlantic voyages

### **Tuesday, June 23, 2015**

**Stango Park, 111 Adams Ave., Lewes. 302-645-1148**

7 p.m. Concert by the [Skinny Leg Pete Band](#) performing soul, funk, blues and rock 'n' roll. Part of Lewes' Summer Concert Series

### **Wednesday, June 24, 2015**

**Lewes Historical Society complex, 110 Shipcarpenter St., Lewes. 302-645-7670**

Noon "[Treasures of the Sea](#)." Lecture by Susan Doering, coordinator of the exhibit at the Delaware Technical and Community College in Georgetown

1:15 p.m. "Cape Henlopen Quarantine Station." Lecture by Shawn Heacock, trainer/educator at [Cape Henlopen State Park](#)

2:30 p.m. "History of the U.S. Life-Saving Service in Delaware." Utilizing a local shipwreck as an illustration, Laura Scharle, site supervisor of the [Indian River Life-Saving Station](#) discusses the formation of the service and common 19th-century rescue techniques

3:45 p.m. "Run It Up the Flagpole and Sea." Utilizing a reconstructed 1884 life-saving station as a setting, visitors will work together to decode a nautical signal-flag message in order to rescue an imaginary stranded ship and crew. This family-friendly program will also feature historical interpreters, dressed in period clothing, portraying members of the U.S. Life-Saving Service as they share true tales of harrowing shipwrecks and rescues off of the Delaware coast

6 p.m. Old-time radio show presented by the [Ad Hoc Touring Company](#), a component of Possum Point Players in Georgetown, Del.

7:15 p.m. [Christian Johnson](#) of the American Historical Theatre portrays Gov. William Augustus Newell, founder of U.S. Life-Saving Service

### **Thursday, June 25, 2015**

**Lewes Historical Society complex, 110 Shipcarpenter St.,  
Lewes. 302-645-7670**

Noon Demonstration of fly-casting and other fly-fishing techniques

1:15 p.m. Lecture on the Lightship Overfalls by Bob Gibson of the [Overfalls Foundation](#)

2:30 p.m. "World War II Subchasers." Presentation by historian Joan Lofland on the subchasers built at the Vinyard Shipyard in Milford, Del.

3:45 p.m. "Salvage of His Majesty's Sloop DeBraak."



Claudia Leister, executive director of the Milford Museum, discusses the salvage operation of the 18th-century British warship that took place off the coast of Cape Henlopen in the 1980s

6 p.m. [Pirates Royale](#) Duo. Swashbuckling family-friendly musical performance

7:15 p.m. “Embargo Acts, Trade, Privateers and Crossing the Atlantic.” [Kim Hanley](#) of the American Historical Theatre portrays first lady Abigail Adams as she describes her trans-Atlantic voyages and speaks her mind about issues of the day during the American Revolution

**-End-**

**Contact:**

Jim Yurasek

Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

Phone: 302-736-7413

E-mail: [Jim.Yurasek@delaware.gov](mailto:Jim.Yurasek@delaware.gov)

Web: <http://history.delaware.gov>